The 31 December 1994-8 February 1995 Battle for Grozny

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The Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation is located in the federation's southwestern corner near the Caspian Sea. It covers approximately 6,500 square miles, measuring nearly 100 miles by 70 miles at its widest points. Several terrain features dominate the republic. In the north, there is a plain that runs nearly 35 to 40 miles until it empties into the center of Chechnya (where Grozny is located). The foothills begin south of Grozny and run close to 20 miles until they merge into the Caucasus Mountains in the south. Elevations in Chechnya range from 200 feet in the northern plains to 12,000 feet in the mountains. The republic has one major river, the Terek, which runs west to east across the plains in the north of Chechnya (see Map 1).

From late December 1994 until 8 February 1995, Russia's armed forces fought against its own citizens in the city of Grozny, Chechnya, the capital of the republic.[1] The roots of the conflict are historical. The entire region was part of Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. Russian expansion into the region began in the late eighteenth century as Russia sought allies among the Christian population and suppressed local revolts that had tribal and religious content. In the Soviet period, the region briefly enjoyed independence from Moscow but was reconquered by the early 1920s. Some national groups in the region, the Chechens being one of them, sided with German invaders during World War II and were treated as traitor-nations when areas were reconquered by the Soviets. Joseph Stalin deported the population of Chechnya to Kazakhstan and other areas in 1944 for Chechen disloyalty. It was not until 1957 that the Chechens returned on the order of then General Secretary Nikita Khruschev. Regardless of this act, a simmering hatred of Russians remains just below the level of consciousness for many Chechens. A local saying supporting this attitude is that "a shot is fired in the Caucasus, but the echo lasts for 100 years."[2]

The term "Grozny" means terrible or formidable. Russian General Alexy Yermolov founded Grozny on 10 June 1818. It served as a fortress or outpost for Russian forces operating in the Caucasus against the Chechens. When Yermolov assumed command of the Caucasus in 1816, he quickly appreciated the difficulty of defending the 700-mile Caucasian perimeter against raiders and established Grozny to help

Map 1

protect it. In 1994, it was a city of approximately 490,000 inhabitants. It had a mixture of Chechens and Russians, along with a few other nationalities, and covered nearly 90 square miles if the suburbs are included. The city runs predominantly from the northwest to the southeast. It is cut into four sectors by two features: the Sunzha River running from the northeast to the southwest and a railroad line running from the southwest to the center of the city and then departing the city due east. A refinery complex is located in the southwestern portion of the city, and there are two airports, one to the northwest and one due east

of the city. The city has a mixture of buildings ranging from 10- to 15-story structures to those with only one story. These buildings are made of concrete for the most part. Approximately 123 roads lead in and out of Grozny.

Russian authorities became concerned with activities in Chechnya in 1991, in particular with the intentions of Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev. He publicly sought to create a "single trans-Caucasian republic stretching to include parts of Russia and Ukraine as well as all of the Caucasian and trans-Caucasian region."[3] This was of immense concern to Russia, since critical oil and natural gas pipelines run through the region, as well as trade routes to the Middle East. In fact, the Caucasus is a key geostrategic door for Russia to the Middle East.

The 1994-95 fight for Grozny was precipitated by a strange, even bizarre sequence of events. Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian Republic and serving under the Soviet Union's General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, stated in 1991 that the republics should "chew off all the sovereignty they can swallow." The Russian Republic's president soon came to wish he had never uttered that phrase. Chechnya, a component part of the Russian Republic, took Yeltsin at his word. A small, localized revolution began on 21 August 1991 in Chechnya, two days after the August coup in the former Soviet Union. Chechnya declared its independence from Russia on 6 September 1991, citing Yeltsin's proclamation concerning sovereignty. The Amalgamated Congress of the Chechen People invited former Soviet Air Force General Dzhokhar Dudayev, living in Estonia, to be president. Later, he was popularly elected in Chechnya and stated he wanted to free Chechnya from Russian rule. Many Russians in the current regime considered the elections illegal and therefore characterized Dudayev's presidency as illegitimate.[4] Russia's Fifth Congress of People's Deputies not only decreed the elections illegal but also declared Dudayev's regime unconstitutional.[5]

In early September, the Yeltsin administration had transferred power in Chechnya to a provisional supreme council under the command of a professor named Hussein Akmadov. Dudayev, whose power had been growing, decided to take a risk, and he used national guard forces to dissolve the council and occupied its building in the spring of 1993. Russia sent a delegation to negotiate with the Chechen president, but it was too weak to engender military support from Yeltsin to remove Dudayev. In June, Dudayev's presidential guard clashed with protestors of the parliament's dissolution and killed nearly fifty people. In addition, Russia protested the ongoing violations of the Russian

Constitution in Chechnya, the sharp increase in criminal activity in the region, the seizure of hostages by Chechens, and the increased number of deaths among the civilian population. All of these issues increased tension between President Yeltsin and Chechen President Dudayev.[6]

By the latter half of 1993, a group in opposition to Dudayev emerged in Chechnya, primarily in the northern part of the republic. This group initiated a small-scale guerrilla war. In spring 1994 the opposition called upon Russia to support it and help restore constitutional order. Russia's security services eventually supported the opposition covertly during an unsuccessful attack on Grozny in November 1994.[7] Russian complicity was exposed but not before Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev had publicly declared that no Russian soldiers were involved. Humiliated by the loss to the Dudayevites during this so-called Black Operation, Yeltsin ordered an immediate intervention into Chechnya. It began on 11 December 1994. Article 88 of the Russian Constitution and a decree from Yeltsin on 30 November served as the legal basis for the Russian action. The tasks of the Russian forces were to stabilize the situation, disarm armed bands, and reestablish law and order.

The situation itself was unique for Russia's armed forces. The command designation, a combined force operation of troops from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) and the Ministry of Defense (MOD), had not been tried before under such circumstances and on such a scale with such short notice. In addition, before the intervention, there was no serious thought given to the current condition and relative strength of Russia's forces. A special command was created in the North Caucasus Military Region to direct the operation's joint grouping.[8] The operational plan was designed:

> With the goal of disarming illegal armed bands and confiscating weapons and armaments from the population and reestablishing constitutional law and order on the territory of the Chechen Republic, the formations and units of the armed forces, together with other military forces of the Russian Federation, are to implement a special operation in four stages.[9]

Stages one and two were movement plans from outside of Chechnya into the republic. Stage three of the operation focused on objectives:

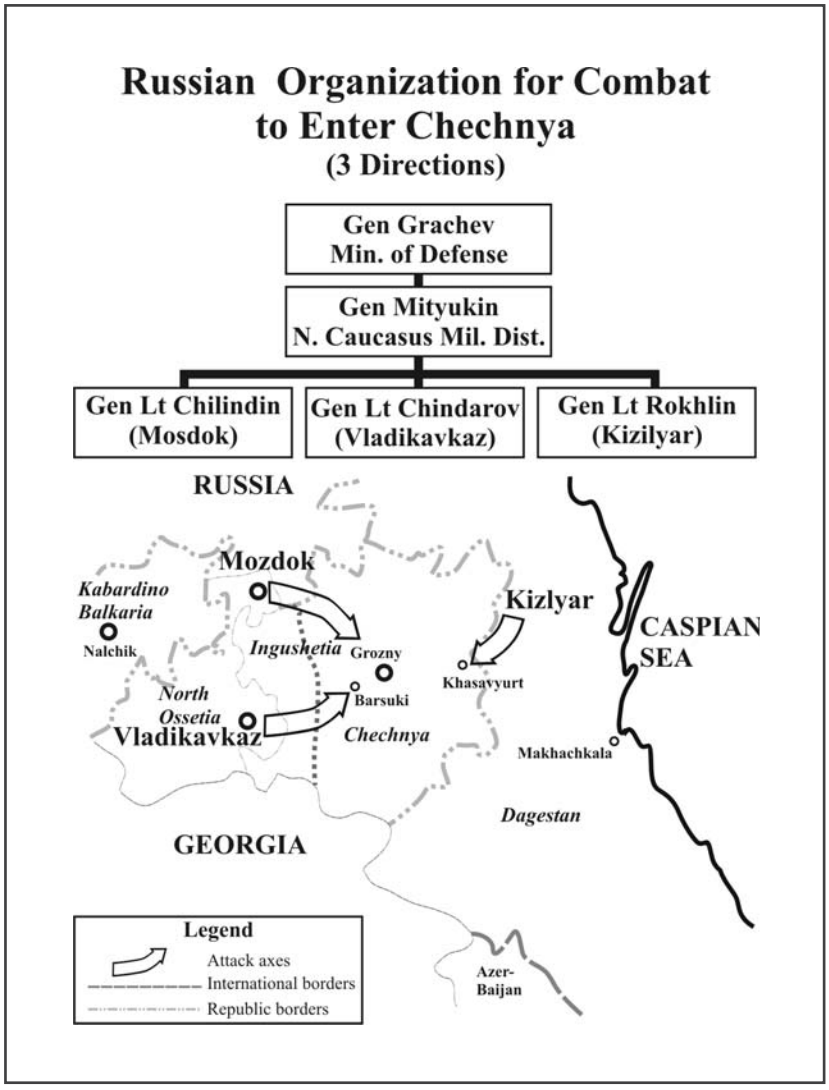
> Formations and units advance from the north and south to capture the Presidential Palace, government buildings, television and radio facilities, and other important structures in Grozny. Then, together with Special Forces subunits of the Internal Affairs Ministry and FSB, continue to confiscate weaponry and materiel.[10]

Finally, stage four was the stabilization of the conflict after capturing key objectives in Grozny.

The Russians believed that Dudayev's men totaled some 10,000 in the city and that they were armed with up to 80 D-30 122-millimeter (mm) howitzers, 25 tanks, and 35 BTRs and BMPs.[11] A few multiple-rocket launchers were also among the Chechens' equipment, as seen on local television reports. The Chechen account of its force size is different. Ilias Akhmadov, a fighter during the first battle for Grozny and now the republic's foreign minister, stated that only 450 Chechen fighters were "permanent," while the others were locals or those who came from neighboring villages. The republic's vice president at the time, Yanderbaiyev, believed the number was closer to 4,500 to 6,000. The actual size of the Chechen force thus remains in doubt.

According to the Russian description of their own forces, they had nearly 24,000 men, 19,000 from the armed forces and 4,700 from the MVD Internal Forces. For equipment, the Russians had 34 battalions (five motorized rifle, two tank, seven airborne, and twenty MVD battalions), which yielded 80 tanks, 208 BMPs, and 182 artillery pieces and mortars. Some 90 helicopters supplemented this effort. Thus, the Russians clearly had an advantage in men and equipment. Some of the Russian forces were real professionals such as the airborne units. Other Russian units, however, not only had never seen combat but also had not been involved in an exercise of this magnitude. Chechen forces were equally diversified. Some Chechens had fought in Abkhazia and were tried veterans. Others were fighting for the first time, although Chechen Ilias Akmadov noted that it took only a few days to turn most Chechens into competent fighters.

Three Russian force groupings were created to move troops into Chechnya from three directions: Mozdok, Vladikavkaz, and Kizliar (see Map 2). The operational plan was for the force groupings to advance on Grozny from six directions (additional directions were variants of the three main movement routes) and to blockade the city by forming two concentric rings. The outer ring, the MVD's responsibility, was to coincide with Chechnya's administrative border, and the inner ring, the MOD's responsibility, was to coincide with Grozny's outer city limits. By the end of December, everything was more or less ready for the Russians to advance on Grozny. Reconnaissance was conducted, vehicles and positions camouflaged, and engineers cleared lanes for passage. Defense Minister Grachev's forces believed that the Chechen command had created three defensive rings to defend Grozny. There was an inner circle with a radius of 1 to 1.5 kilometers (km)



Map 2

around the presidential palace, a middle circle to a distance of up to 1 km from the inner borderline in the northwestern part of the city and up to 5 km in its southwestern and southeastern parts, and an outer circle that passed mainly through the city outskirts. The outer and middle defense rings were based on strongpoints, while the inner line consisted of prepared positions for direct artillery and tank fire. Lower and upper

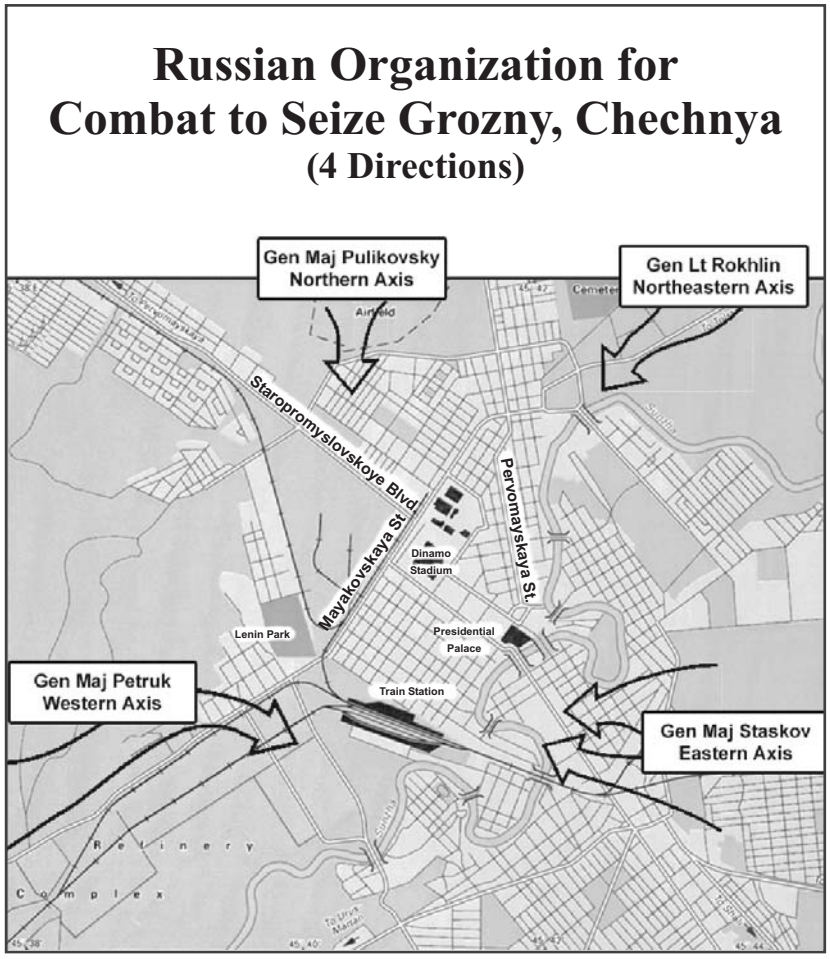
floors of buildings were prepared for the use of firearms and antitank weapons.[12]

The Mozdok grouping under the command of General Lieutenant V.M. Chilindin, moving from the northwest, was composed of the 131st Independent Motorized Rifle Brigade (MRB), the 106th Paratroop Division, and the 56th Independent Paratroop Brigade. Before moving into the city, the units of the northern group were situated in the following way. On the left flank was the 81st Motorized Rifle Regiment (MRR), the 131st MRB was in the center, and on the right was the 276th MRR, according to an interview with force commander General Major Konstantin Pulikovsky (it is assumed these regiments were part of the 106th Paratroop Division). Forces had to cross the small Neftyanka River on the way into Grozny. The western Vladikavkaz axis under the command of General Lieutenant Chindarov contained the 693d MRB of the 19th Motorized Rifle Division, a regiment from the 76th Paratrooper Division, and a paratrooper battalion from the 21st Independent Paratrooper Brigade. The east grouping from Kizlyar under the command of General Lieutenant Lev Roklin contained the 20th Motorized Rifle Division. Commanders, however, were unprepared to move quickly enough, and as the groupings advanced through Chechnya on their way to the city, only the forces from Mozdok and Kizlyar kept to their initial schedules. Other groups only reached initial positions by 20 or 21 December, and as a result, the blockade of the city was never completed. The south remained open to escaping refugees and to Chechen resupply routes, which the Russians did not foresee.[13]

On 26 December 1994, Russia's National Security Council authorized the final move on Grozny. The majority of Dudayev's forces and armaments were thought to be in the city, while armed attacks on Russian forces continued in the outlying areas. As one general noted about the plan of attack:

> The operational plan called for the separation of Grozny into areas or zones, with the railroad tracks and the Sunzha River serving as boundaries in the east-west and north-south directions, respectively. Storm detachments were to attack from several directions at once: from the north, west and east. Upon entering the city they were to coordinate with Special Forces of the MVD and the Federal Security Service and capture the Presidential Palace.[14]

Four columns advanced on Grozny (see Map 3). From the east, General Lieutenant Nikolay Staskov, deputy commander of airborne



Map 3

forces for peacekeeping activity, commanded storm detachments of the 129th MRR and a parachute battalion from the 98th Airborne Division. They were to capture the bridges across the river and link up with the Northern and Western Force Group to block the central part of the city. From the west were two storm detachments of the 19th Motorized Rifle Division from Vladikovkaz under the command of General Major V. Petruk (overall commander of the western direction) and a regiment of the 76th Airborne Division from Pskov under the command of General Ivan Babichev (who was later designated the commander of western forces when Petruk was relieved). These forces were to attack along a

zone bordered on the right by the railroad tracks and on the left by Popovicha Street. Their objectives were to capture the train station and then blockade the presidential palace from the south. In the north, General Major K. Pulikovsky commanded the 131st MRB, the 276th MRR, and the 81st MRR that were to isolate the Chechen formation from the city proper. General Lieutenant Lev Rokhlin commanded the final direction (he also commanded the move from Kizlyar toward Chechnay), the northeast, and he had under his command the 255th MRR. Their job was to block off the northern part of the city and the presidential palace from the north.

On 31 December, when the forces were told to move on the city, the western column commanded by General Petruk still had not arrived at his unit's assembly area outside Grozny. This caused the movement on the city to be disjointed and uncoordinated. According to Pulikovsky, the operation was unfolding so rapidly that the command almost did not have time to name it.

Russian Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev, who planned the attack and hoped to celebrate his birthday on the 31st with the rout of the Chechens, estimated that in 5 to 6 days the town would be fully cleansed of bandit formations.[15] The 81st MRR in the north moved into the city and became ensnared in an ambush on Pervomayskaya Street at about 1500 on 31 December. There was not enough infantry present, according to Pulikovsky, to sniff out the ambush, and the Chechens fired on the tanks in the column repeatedly from the upper windows of multistoried buildings. Pulikovsky, who thought the army would arrive to face little resistance and the Chechens would run, hide in the hills, or at least hide their weapons, later admitted that this initial resistance caught him by surprise. It was hard to imagine the Chechens doing anything while the Russians were in the town.

The 131st Maikop Brigade had moved at 0600 to the bridge over the Sunzha on 31 December and then into the city. Leaflets were distributed stating Chechen combatants should take their magazines out of their weapons, put their weapons over their left shoulder, and slowly advance toward Russian troops. The Chechens laughed at these instructions. In fact, a real but extremely small army was facing the Russians, one with former Soviet officers who understood the basics of Russian city tactics and operating procedures. The 131st entered Grozny unopposed. It was to have taken up a blocking position on the western side of the city but, sensing no opposition, reported back to Pulikovsky that it was ready to move on to its next objective. Apparently unaware of the situation of the 81st MRR, Pulikovsky

authorized the 131st Maikovskiy Brigade to proceed to the train station near the city's center, also around 1500 on 31 December. Perhaps there was no opposition because Dudayev had only a few hundred fighters at the time and had focused most of his attention on the 81st MRR, the initial unit in contact. Colonel Savin led his forces into the city as if participating in a parade, according to Russian reports. He went along Staropromyslovskoye Boulevard to Mayakovskaya Street and then to the train station in the city center. All units were to link up there, and Savin got there first.

Savin reported that nothing was happening and that troops were lined up at the ticket counter arranging their rides home. Later in the day, however, Savin's communications chief reported that he had heard the phrase "welcome to hell" through his headset. Savin did not know if this was some type of joke or a warning. Suddenly, without warning, some Chechen fighters appeared behind the train station, and all hell broke loose. The Russians did not understand initially what had happened. Since the situation appeared so calm, they had gone into the train station, hardly securing their vehicles or even bothering to post guards. In the meantime, Chechen mobile units had fallen back on the city center and had surrounded them at the train station. They methodically began to destroy the Soviet BMPs with rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fire. Not in their wildest dreams could the Russians imagine how unpredictable and vulnerable their situation had become.

According to one participant, everything happened very fast, as if a nuclear war had started with no one around. In addition to the shooting, the Chechens attempted to demoralize the Russians, using communications intercepts to relay threats. For the Russians, of course, there was no thought of surrender. But after a few hours, Russian ammunition began to run low (they had not planned on extensive battles in the city), and they began to lose scores of soldiers to the Chechen onslaught. The 74th Brigade was to have advanced at nearly the same time as the 131st, which would have offered some reinforcements, but they stopped to celebrate New Year's Eve. The 503d Regiment was supposed to be sent into Grozny to support the movement as well, but it refused to move, citing lack of preparation. The commander of the 503d said he had fulfilled his order already and saw no reason to put everyone at risk that way at night in a city. The 131st then attempted a breakout from the train station and lost 60 more men, including Colonel Savin. The Chechens also took severe losses in the fighting. Estimates later were that the Russians had 300 soldiers in the train station to fight against 1,000 Chechens, figures that the Chechens contest.

Clearly, the Chechen plan of defense perceived by Grachev (the three concentric rings) did not appear to be the case in reality as the Chechens were apparently organized quite differently. Otherwise, the Russian force could not have proceeded to the city center with such ease. According to Chechen Ilias Akmadov, the Russians were not "lured" into the city center but "driven" there because there were no concentric rings or forces available for such resistance. The Chechens, in fact, noted that no such plan existed. Instead, the "situation did the organizing." One fighter noted that the attack on 31 December came as a surprise to him, a statement supported by the fact that no barricades or fighters met the Russian force moving into the city that day. The Chechens lacked enough numerical strength to organize even one echelon of defense around the city.

However, the company or group commanders had a great deal of autonomy. Mobile groups of ten to twelve people operated relatively independently, each group consisting of one grenade launcher, two snipers, and the rest with automatic weapons. There simply were no well-defined lines of defense. The groups were always on the move. The greatest weakness was their inability to coordinate Chechen regular forces with local militias, although intimate knowledge of the city helped overcome this weakness. At times, seventy people made their way through dead space while Russians were only 30 to 40 meters away. This was especially true at night when the Russian soldiers lost the desire to move around, according to a Chechen fighter.[16] The Chechens had little if any urban combat training, a fact that makes one marvel at their success. Akmadov noted that everything was so condensed and quick that it only took a few days to turn a raw recruit into the Chechen concept of "a professional."

According to interviews conducted after the fighting ended, the Chechens also had a fixed method of conducting ambushes. The ambush was based on using 25-man groups composed of three mobile squads of two heavy machine gunners, two RPG gunners, one sniper, and three riflemen. Three of these 25-man groups (supported by an 82mm mortar crew with two tubes) would conduct an ambush as a 75-man unit. Three of the eight-man squads would serve as a "killer team" and set up in three positions along the ambush route. They would occupy the lower level of buildings in the ambush zone to prevent being wounded by incoming artillery. The remaining fifty men would occupy blocking positions to ensure the entrapped Russians could not escape and to prevent reinforcements from entering the ambush area.[17] To counter this tactic, the Russians would conduct extensive artillery fire

on a proposed route of advance, attempting to reduce buildings along the route to rubble. This method proved effective, although on occasion, the rubble served as excellent ambush positions for the Chechen fighters.

In fairness to the Russians, however, it must be noted that the Russian force was poorly trained. As General Boris Gromov, commander of the Soviet Union's 40th Army in Afghanistan, noted about Russia's armed forces:

> The troops taking part in the combat operations had not been prepared for this either morally or physically or professionally. The armed forces are not distinguished today by a high degree of training or personnel and they lack a sufficient quantity of equipment that is in good working order and combat-ready, communication and control facilities, technical and rear support, and so forth. All this condemned the military campaign in Chechnya in advance to big casualties on both sides.[18]

State Duma deputy Viktor Sheynis' eyewitness information about the 31 December operation was available in newspapers on 2 January. He indicated that the initial attack on New Year's Eve was a total disaster for Russia. According to an interview with a participant of the operation, the 131st MRB and the 81st MRR took the brunt of the losses. In one column alone, 102 of 120 armored personnel carriers and 20 of 26 tanks were destroyed by Chechen antitank fire; all six "Tunguska" surface-to-air missile systems were destroyed. Seventy-four servicemen, including a corps operations officer, were captured.[19] The commander of a division surface-to-air missile platoon, Lieutenant Colonel Aleksandr Labzenko, added that:

> . . . they were not trained to fight in cities and an enormous amount of armored equipment, thoughtlessly left in narrow streets without any cover, was not protected by the infantry . . . there is a lack of even basic cooperation between different subunits and their commanders and subordinates.[20]

In short, the Chechens nearly brought the Russian force to its knees from 1-3 January. One Russian close to the fighting reported that "many officers in Chechnya have confessed to me in mid-January 1995 that at the beginning of that month the Russian Army was on the verge of refusing to obey the ridiculous orders of its commanders and the government."[21] Later in the year, the head of Yeltsin's personal security force, Alexander Korzhakov, allegedly noted that "Grachev dragged Yeltsin into the Chechen mess, and a man of integrity [in Grachev's shoes] would have shot himself."[22]

According to retrospective reports, there were three principal reasons for the initial disaster. First, the Russian army worked under severe restrictions, some self-imposed and some imposed by nature. One officer noted that the rules of engagement did not allow for the Russians to open fire first, resulting in the deaths or wounding of many soldiers.[23] Military support was most severely affected, however, by some commanders refusing to participate in the coordinated attack on Grozny (in particular, the commanders of axes west and east who did not enter the city despite their radio reports that they had). Most likely this was not due to cowardice on the part of the officers in charge of the western and eastern columns but, rather, to confusion and a lack of administrative and air support available after entering the city's outskirts, leaving their forces vulnerable. This left the 131st MRB and 81st MRR without support and at the mercy of the Chechens. In addition, nature worked against the Russian force. Not only was it winter but also bad weather limited air support on 1 and 2 January.

Second, the Russian army was unprepared and untrained for immediate combat, let alone combat in cities. To fight under such circumstances was simply absurd and doomed to failure. Anne Garrels of National Public Radio was in the basement of the presidential palace on 3 January and interviewed Russian prisoners of war (POWs).[24] Some of the young recruits told her that they did not know with whom they were riding as they entered the city because they had been thrown together as a crew only a day or so before; that they did not understand who was fighting whom; that some of the soldiers thought they were going into Grozny for police or law enforcement duty and not to fight; and that some of the soldiers had neither a weapon, ammunition, a map, nor a mission. Some, in fact, were sleeping in the back of their BMP or BTR as it entered the city. In addition, there was little training to coordinate units' and subunits' actions. This was particularly true for missions involving the armed forces and the MVD troops.

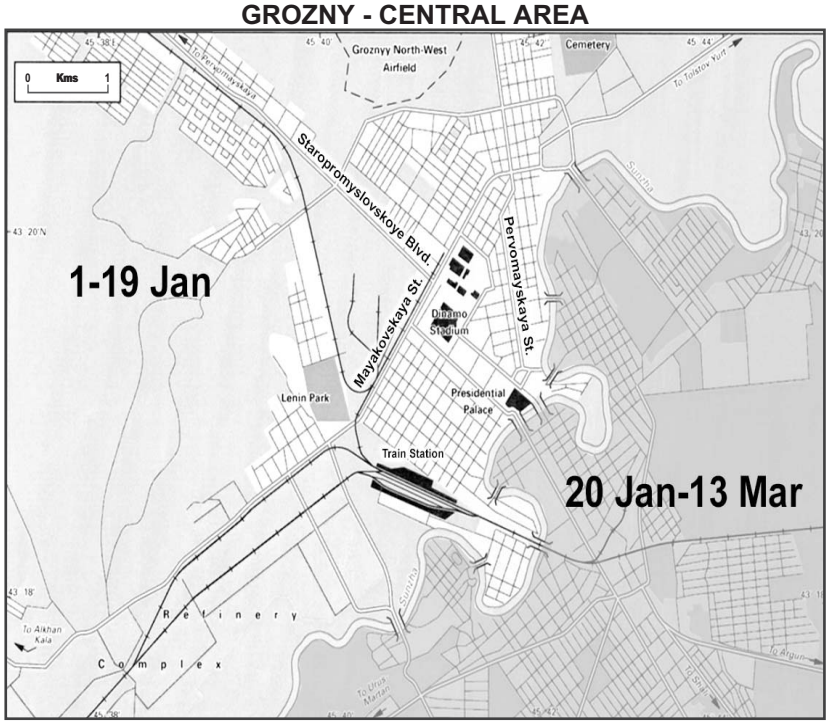
Third, the Russian leadership did not do a good job of preparing the "theater" for warfare. The High Command neither sealed off the republic's borders nor took the time required to rehearse properly for the potential scenarios that Dudayev had prepared for them. One general, choosing anonymity, noted that after liberating several city districts, Russian forces realized that Dudayev had created numerous firing points, communications nets, and underground command points that made the job much more difficult. In this respect, the main military intelligence (GRU) and federal counterintelligence service (FSK) did

poor jobs of providing information on the armed formations that the Russian force faced, compounding the fate of the untrained soldiers.[25]

Still unexplained in the initial plan is the Russian commanders' apparent disregard of the lessons learned from the "Black Operation" the anti-Dudayev opposition forces conducted in November 1994. For example, Major Valeriy Ivanov, speaking to State Duma deputies about the failed 26 November attack, noted that he was told "special forces would be at work there [in Grozny] and helicopters would provide fire support from the air. Infantry would be attached to the tanks." None of this support appeared. Lieutenant Dmitriy Volfovich supported Ivanov, noting that the tankers could not respond with machine gun fire because "the machine guns were not loaded." And a plan to paint tank hatches white to allow helicopter pilots to identify friend from foe backfired when no helicopter support appeared, and Dudayev's force fired on "white caps" against a gray background.[26] Chechen forces fought according to their own plans, which Defense Minister Grachev, for one, viewed as inhumane. For example, he noted that Chechen forces conducted attacks under cover of civilian "human shields" and fought from positions in hospitals, schools, and apartment blocks.[27]

The shocking defeat of 1-3 January changed the course of the remainder of the fight for the city. In fact, the battle of Grozny can be divided into three separate parts. Part one is the 31 December-3 January fight described to this point. Part two refers to actions taken between 4-17 January when the Russians recovered and captured President Dudayev's palace and the northern portion of the city while Chechen resistance evacuated the presidential palace and took up defensive positions on the other side of the Sunzha River. Part three focuses on the fighting from 17 January to 8 February when Russian forces managed to rid Grozny of the major Chechen fighting elements on the southern side of the Sunzha (see Map 4).

Despite the shock and heavy losses suffered in the attack of 1-3 January, the worst appeared over by 4-5 January due to an apparent Chechen retreat. Moscow's official mood once again appeared to be one of optimism. First came reports of Chechens moving out of Grozny and aircraft strikes on their remaining tanks and other combat vehicles (or those the Chechens captured in the first four days of the fight).[28] Chechen convoys moving in a southerly and southeastern direction were passing through outlying villages along two routes—either through the villages of Shali, Serzhen-Yurt, and Benoy-Vedeno or the villages of Shali, Kirov-Yurt, and Makhkety—while the center of Grozny remained under Chechen control.[29] Enemy groups were also re-



Map 4

portedly moving in a northeasterly direction away from Grozny but were repulsed from entering Dagestan by OMON (special purpose militia detachments), border troops, and Internal Forces, as well as fire support from the air, according to official sources.[30] Russian Vice Premier Yegorov noted that Grozny should be taken on 5 January without any further fighting and the legitimate government established simultaneously.[31] This information was contradicted by live reporting from the area by Russian journalists who reported that Dudayev subunits controlled the streets and had many Russian units surrounded.[32] Thus, when viewed in hindsight, reports that the worst appeared over indicate that Russian officials tried to cover up their shortcomings while the independent media thwarted this attempt at official deception.

It was clear to those on the ground that the battle would indeed proceed according to a different scenario. On the 6th, the Interfax news agency reported that special units of the Russian MOD destroyed a Chechen commando group using weapons "with elements of artificial intelligence." These elements included using aerial reconnaissance and satellite data as well as laser- and television (TV)-guided air-to-surface

missiles. According to the source, this would not be the last use of weapons designed for other "theaters of operation."[33]

By 7 January, Orthodox Christmas, it was evident that the Russian military was in a dogfight, and no amount of optimistic press reports would change the story. Ostankino TV noted that the fighting was the most fierce since 31 December-1 January, reporting on the 7th that the entire town was ablaze, along with the refinery and other outlying industrial companies.[34] Clearly, the war was not getting any easier for the Russian forces. Ham radio operators in Chechnya transmitted information on Russian troops that allowed the Chechens to pinpoint Russian locations.[35]

Russian reconnaissance units searched for Russian POWs, while federal troops continued to fight well-armed mobile groups of Chechens. The Chechens used civil defense as well as underground sewage and water tunnels both to flank and to get into the rear of military units. Chechen tactics added to the advancing Russians' psychological stress. They booby-trapped tanker trucks, mined roads, and held civilians hostage.[36] In addition, Russian artillery shells were reportedly falling in the city of Grozny at a rate of 15 to 20 per minute (the latter report from a Duma representative).[37]

One Chechen commander reported having 85 to 125 men defending a district of Grozny that extended 1 km. He added that he had only two RPG-7s at the time and that he doubted if Chechen Chief of Staff Aslan Maskhadov had more than 400 men total. His unit's tactic:

> was to fire at the enemy everywhere without being seen anywhere. The Russians did not know where and who the enemy was. We shot, destroyed, withdrew, went home to sleep, returned to start military actions again. No organization or planning. We were independent hunters.[38]

At the same time, journalists were striking back at Russian military leaders for the latter's criticism of the reporting from Grozny. Members of the news media pointed out that it was nearly impossible to report from military bases because they could not go anywhere and their cameras and film were confiscated, whereas the Dudayevites helped reporters. This resulted in "one-sided" reporting from the Dudayev perspective according to some journalists who asked who was to blame for portraying events under such conditions, the journalists or the Russian military commanders who refused the journalists access to Russian soldiers?[39] Even the Russian command later indicated it had made a serious mistake in this area. Counterintelligence head Sergei

Stepashin noted that "we began the operation in Chechnya without having prepared public opinion for it at all. . . I would include the simply absurd ban on journalists working among our troops . . . while journalists were his [Dudayev's] invited guests."[40]

Regrouping took place on 8 and 9 January after the ferocious fighting of the 7th. Russian Internal Forces busily tried to restore the Chechen police force, a necessity to return Grozny to self-rule. They appealed to anyone among the local populace who wished to work to restore law and order.[41] Russian military commanders talked to militants in buildings through megaphones, urging them to lay down their arms. As these efforts were under way, indications were that young Chechen volunteers aged 16 to 18 arrived to reinforce their republic's armed formations as well as "a regiment of kamikazes" wearing black headbands.[42] Chechens also were sent to the Russian side to misinform the federal armed forces about Chechen plans, and a network of informers advised on all movements of internal and defense forces as the latter proceeded through North Ossetia, Ingushetia, and Dagestan.[43] Another report indicated that in early January a group of sixty fighters, half of them women, swore on the Koran an oath of allegiance to sovereign Chechnya and its president, vowing to go to Moscow to commit subversive and terrorist actions.[44] There also was a report that up to a hundred Russians had surrendered in Grozny on 7 and 8 January, some of them special forces troops. In a few instances, some soldiers were drunk. Reporting ended on the stark note that in recent days, in the freezing basements where the civilians were huddled, babies were being born.[45] This indicates the extent of the varied missions and problems confronting soldiers in urban environments and the difficulty in uncovering the truth.

On 9 January, the Russian government declared a cease-fire. It would begin at 0800 on 10 January and last for 48 hours, according to the official announcement. Just two hours after the cease-fire started on the 10th, Russian artillery shells began raining down on the Chechen presidential palace.[46] The head of the Chechen General Staff, Aslan Maskhadov, declared the 48-hour cease-fire a Moscow "trick." It is not known if Russia's forces simply disobeyed the order on purpose or if the continuation of firing was due to Chechen actions and the Russian forces were merely acting in self-defense:

> The Russians reported on the 10th of January that the Chechens were breaking the cease-fire of the 9th (which the Chechens reported was already broken by the Russians), and so federal troops were merely responding according to the principle of "adequate response."[47]

This tactic of double-crossing one another after an agreement was to be repeated many times in the coming months.

By 10 January, the Russian force had managed to make two corridors into the city for supplying the army and evacuating wounded servicemen to hospitals, but talks with authorities to remove the bodies of Russian soldiers lying on Grozny's streets were fruitless.[48] However, the Chechens did allow a Russian POW and representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church in Grozny to do the negotiating with the Russian side (with General Babichev, the new commander of Russian forces entering Grozny from the west). Moscow radio reported that the Chechens had gathered the bodies of Russians lying near the presidential palace and piled them in one place, with sentries firing short volleys to drive hungry dogs away from the bodies.[49]

Also on 10 January, a report indicated that federal forces attacked in the direction of the presidential palace but were beaten back. If the attack occurred, it was not a serious one, and only rarely were mortars heard. Russian troops remained about 400 meters to the north and 1.5 km to the west of the city center.[50] Radio Ekho Moskvy was, as usual, much more negative in its reporting (Radio Ekho Moskvy talked with Chechens and did not rely on strictly official Russian reports), noting that two Chechen negotiators carrying white flags were killed, Chechen villages were bombed, and Russian units appeared to be preparing for a new assault on 12 January, when the cease-fire officially ended.[51] The contradictions in these two reports indicate just how much ITAR-TASS's official reporting and the nongovernmental reporting from agencies such as Ekho Moskvy differed.

During the cease-fire that finally took place later on the 10th, Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin offered an interesting concession worthy of note. He proposed to villagers in Chechnya that if they ensured that armed formations did not open fire from or within populated areas, he would guarantee that the federal troops would not conduct combat operations there.[52]

On the combat front, Dudayev's militants continued to resist in scattered regions of the city, especially in the Katayama, Baranovka, and Oktyabrskiy districts, and they continued to disguise themselves as local inhabitants or even Russian soldiers. Internal forces focused on guarding administrative borders of the Chechen republic and on conducting operations to locate local gangs to disarm and/or liquidate them. Federal forces continued the search for POWs.[53] On 11 January, a Russian TV documentary depicted the fighting in Chechnya for the first time from a Russian perspective. Titled "Hell" and produced by

Aleksandr Nevzorov, who previously held anti-Yeltsin views, the documentary clearly was a progovernment production designed to bolster army morale and to show the country the difficulties the average soldier in Chechnya faced. For the first time, the character of the conflict was given a new understanding, as the Chechen force's strength and their atrocities were depicted. Nevzorov, speaking with commander Lev Rokhlin, noted that the Chechens could only be considered an army and not merely bandit formations. Rokhlin agreed and added, "it is a mercenary army."[54]

In another report, more difficult to believe but supported by later interviews with Chechen fighters, Radio Ekho Moscow tape recorded interviews with Russian soldiers and reported that special troops stood behind the soldiers when they went into battle and threatened to shoot them if they retreated or tried to give up; the soldiers also reported that they had an order to kill women, old people, and children.[55] This statement was reminiscent of the actions of the old People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) to prevent Russian and Soviet desertions in past hostilities.

At 0800 on 12 January, the cease-fire officially ended. During the cease-fire, an additional 100 vehicles arrived to reinforce Russian positions. Federal forces regrouped, rotated troops, and prepared for the next assault. The Russians apparently could not wait for 0800 to arrive. At 0700, Russian forces pounded the city center incessantly with artillery (shells landed every ten seconds for over three hours), and at 0930, forty Grad rockets slammed into the main city square. Russian snipers also gained some ground.[56] Fighting was intense, and the Russian assault continued during 13-14 January, with most of the combat activity centered at the buildings of the presidential palace, the Council of Ministers, Chechen Internal Affairs, and security ministries and at the railway station.[57] Simultaneously, MVD forces blockaded the main departure routes out of Grozny as well as Chechnya's administrative borders. An indicator of how intense the fighting had become was that doctors no longer put on their white smocks because Chechen snipers were using them for targets. Earlier, Chechen militants downed three ambulance helicopters displaying red crosses, according to Moscow reports.[58]

It was not until 15 January that the whole town was sealed off, including its southern sector.[59] This was the first time the armed forces had succeeded in accomplishing this, a fact many viewed as a prerequisite to entering the town in the first place. Chechen forces immediately tried to deploy additional troops in the south to prevent the

encirclement from becoming permanent.[60] The 15th also witnessed continued attacks by Russian shock units and assault detachments to dislodge Dudayev's fighters from a number of buildings and continued attempts by paratroopers, motorized infantry units, and marines to get inside the presidential palace, an effort that would take another four days. Female snipers were rumored to be fighting for the Chechens, and during the assault, Interfax news agency reported that a female sniper from Belarus had been killed.[61] However, when asked his opinion, Russian 8th Army Corps commander Lev Rokhlin noted that the militants' resistance had slackened, and the only reason the Russians had not taken the presidential palace was to keep the casualty rate low since Russian POWs reportedly were still in the basement. Rokhlin noted the militants were short of ammunition, supplies, and food, and on orders from the Chechen leadership, the militants were now possibly being issued drugs.[62]

On 19 January, the Mayak Radio Network reported that the Russian Federation flag was flying over the presidential palace in Grozny. While many assumed that the fighting was over, combat continued for a month or so. The battle to date had only included the northern and central parts of Grozny. South of the Sunzha, the Chechens still controlled much of the city. Therefore, raising the flag was mostly a symbolic act. It did, however, confirm Russian control over President Dudayev's center of power and symbol of resistance.

ITAR-TASS reported on 19 January that Dudayev had lost control over his forces, Chechen communications had become unreliable, and foreign mercenaries were now in the second echelon. Dudayev's militants reportedly killed those who ran away.[63] Dudayev moved to the southeastern district of the town (to the opposite side of the Sunzha River) and replaced his bodyguard with Lithuanian mercenaries.[64] Another report had Dudayev taking refuge in the bomb shelter of City Hospital No. 5 along with a 150- to 200-man guard force while a new headquarters was being prepared for him in the mountain regions of Chechnya.[65]

Meanwhile, battles continued to rage in the southern sections of Grozny. Russian reinforcements continued to be rushed in from as far away as the Pacific Fleet. It was not until 21 January that group West and group North (now containing elements of group East and the remnants of the main assault force from the north) met in the center of Grozny. The Chechens moved to the southeast section of the city and established a bridgehead on the other side of the Sunzha River. A few

days later, the Russian army began a month-long final assault on those positions.[66]

Also on 21 January, Russian reporting indicated that the situation in the center of Grozny had somewhat eased.[67] Russian Federal Counterintelligence Service director Sergey Stepashin noted that about 3,500 Chechen militants still remained in Grozny, however. Vladimir Polozhentsev of Ostankino TV reported that military and political leaders of the Chechen Republic were preparing provocations in the region, aiming to exacerbate ethnic tensions and destabilize the situation in the North Caucasus in general.[68] On 22 January, news agencies reported that elements of the Chechen population were beginning to insist that Dudayev's men occupying villages surrounding Grozny leave and take their weapons with them, to include mobile missile launchers.[69] In Grozny, however, militants continued to lay mines along their routes of retreat, to recruit new fighters, to bring in reserves, and to set up command posts to the south of the Sunzha River. Fifty new mercenaries with blue berets and the inscription "Ukraine" had also appeared.[70]

On 24 January, ITAR-TASS reported that army troops and internal forces were preparing to form "commandant zones." They also formed a garrison procurator's office. Militant actions now were only occurring at night and appeared to lack synergy. However, some Chechen units were bribing people to provoke aggressive actions, and some representatives of the Chechen clergy still were reported to be calling on local residents for terrorist acts against Russian servicemen.[71] Russian forces continued artillery bombardment of the outlying districts of Grozny. Russian Defense Minister Grachev felt the scattered resistance was insignificant and believed that there were no population centers in Chechnya where bandit formations could mount serious opposition to federal forces.[72] This assessment would be proven tragically wrong.

The normally antigovernment radio station, Ekho Moskvy, noted that federal forces had basically completed their tasks and that the MVD would have the city under its total control by the end of January. Then only the MVD and troops from the North Caucasus Military District would be left in Chechnya.[73] On 26 January, Radio Rossii reported that Security Council Secretary Oleg Lobov disclosed that, until a general election was held, an interim administrative body would be set up to rule Chechnya.[74] Also on 26 January, ITAR-TASS offered a final situation report. Clearly, the essence of the report was that the internal forces now were in charge. While federal troops continued to combat militants on the Sunzha River left bank, internal forces:

> . . . blocked the main routes of movement of Chechen militants, sealed off the areas of dislocation of armed formations, and blocked the administrative border of the Chechen republic in order to prevent an inflow of bands, mercenaries, weapons, and military hardware, as well as protected communications, roads and bridges, and inspected transport vehicles.[75]

Finally, on 26 January, control of the fighting on the Russian side was transferred to the MVD in the person of General Anatoliy Kulikov, commander of the internal forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (some 290,000 soldiers at the time). All Russian armed forces in Chechnya were now under his control. He still had much work to do to capture the city.

Reporting from 31 January indicated that Russian troops were blocking streets, engaging in street fighting, and repulsing armed groups' attacks. Thus, the indication was that the Chechens would not leave the city quickly or easily. In addition, Russian troops reported directing intensified shelling on Minutka Square, a key transport and communication intersection a few km southeast of the presidential palace. A large number of Chechen forces were reportedly concentrating there. Mobile groups as large as thirty to forty men were in the area.[76]

On 2 February, Kulikov noted that the army and internal forces were continuing to succeed in pushing the Chechens out of Grozny, underscoring that the larger part of the city was under Russian control. Part of Oktyabrskiy District, another key road intersection in the south of the city near Minutka Square, remained under Dudayev's control. Russian forces used the Shmel flamethrower to destroy strongpoints and snipers, and began to demonstrate more confidence in their operation.[77] Troops continued disarming Chechen formations in Grozny and organized police work in the Leninskiy district of Grozny. The Chechens, however, maintained that they retained control of the right bank of the Sunzha and that they continued to smash Russian special subunits. On 3 February, the Russian bridgehead was expanded to Leningrad Street where it crossed Yakutskiy Street. As a result, Kulikov noted that a "turning point" was now in sight, and on 5 February, Minister of Defense Grachev stated that control was established over Minutka Square and over the southern approaches to the city.[78]

The Chechens, however, still held out and decided not to give up the city without a fight. On 6 February, Kulikov noted that some of his forces in the city were under multiple rocket launcher and heavy artillery attacks from the few items of this sort in the Chechen inventory (obtained before the war illegally or acquired during the fight for

Grozny). Countering these threats required the operational subordination of Defense Ministry tanks and helicopters to the internal forces, equipment not standard issue to the MVD. The Chechens reported that they still held most of the Oktyabrskiy District and the suburb of Chernorechye in the southern and southwestern parts of Grozny, while Russian reporting countered these claims. In addition, snipers and small formations of Chechens infiltrated the city in some regions and continued to battle the Russian blockade in other areas. On 8 February, the city was reported to be 80 percent under the control of General Kulikov's internal forces, but Chechen mobile assault groups still remained. At night, the Chechens continued to rule the streets, and it was then that most of the Russian casualties occurred. Supposedly, the Chechen main command had evacuated the city and moved to other, smaller cities, leaving only a reconnaissance and harassment force in place.[79] This tactic of "successive cities" was a recurrent theme throughout the war.

A significant development very much related to the battlefield activities under way was the announcement on 8 February that a Bureau for Current Information and a Mobile Information Center were being established under the federal executive authorities' Territorial Administration in the Chechen Republic. Yevgeniy Ivanov was appointed chief of the Press Service Mobile Information Center. Representatives of the public relations center of all the security services were also included in the work of the center.[80] This would finally allow the Russian press service to control some of the reporting from Chechnya and would allow all of the services to sing from a common sheet of music. To date, Russia had completely lost the "information war" because it had allowed the Chechens (who even gave reporters access to operational material) to control the reporting.

The battle for Grozny continued until 23 February. On 16 February, a cease-fire was declared to exchange prisoners and the wounded. Combat resumed on the 20th, and the Russians seized the heights above the area of Novye Promysly. This was important in that Dudayev's TV broadcasting center was located there on Hill 373. The Chechens tried to retake the hill three days later but failed and instead fled to other cities or into the mountains. By 23 February, Dudayev's remaining detachments were surrounded in the areas of Novye Promysly, Aldy, and Chernorech'e.

Chechen Chief of Staff Aslan Maskhadov commented on the final withdrawal of his forces from Grozny. He expressed pride at his men's accomplishments over the past month and termed the current situation

not a retreat but a planned withdrawal. He added that his Chechen force did not possess Russia's superiority in artillery, tanks, and planes but that if one of his men had ten RPGs, then he expected eight tanks to be destroyed. One Chechen fighter added the following:

> I never thought that I would see this happen. There will be much blood paid for this. The Russians have made a bad, bad mistake. But we did manage to hold out here for 37 days—Berlin lasted only two weeks in 1945. This war will continue, only now it will be one without front lines.[81]

When a shot is fired in the Caucasus, the echo lasts 100 years.

Thus, at the end of February, after nearly 40 days of sustained battle, the fight for Grozny was over. The Chechens moved on to other cities, a habit they followed throughout the course of the war, which ended in August 1996. Perhaps the Chechens' initial success in Grozny was the motivation for this tactic. They found out in the first few weeks of January 1995 that, even when badly outmanned and outequipped, the city offered them unique advantages—familiarity with the terrain, the element of surprise, and the use of nonlinear and asymmetric tactics, among others. The Chechens gained confidence in their ability to withstand even the most ferocious Russian armed offensive. They did so despite having no air support at all. The Russians, for their part, did not consider the battle for Grozny a victory as much as they did a successful operation. They suffered incredible losses in the first week of fighting and then drew on the experience of their artillery forces and storm detachments to collect themselves and conduct block-by-block fighting until they eventually drove the Chechens out of the city. Simultaneously, the Russian forces began the process of turning the local population against them. Unfortunately, the Russians maintained an air of arrogance after this success that eventually led to their defeat and expulsion from the republic in the August 1996 battle for Grozny.

The January 1995 battle for Grozny offered lessons learned from a variety of perspectives. What follows are four different looks at the fighting. First, there is the reporting of Russian military correspondents—beginning with Igor Korotchenko—who were in the city during the fight. Second, there are named and unnamed Russian military specialists who wrote for journals and magazines, trying to explain what happened in January 1995. Third, there are some professional analyses by Russian leaders of the operation, such as Minister of Defense Grachev and the leader of the main assault and later head of the North

Caucasus Military District, General Kvashnin. Finally, there are testimonies from Chechens who fought the Russians.

News correspondent Korotchenko, a civilian who had studied the ongoing fighting in Chechnya closely over the months of December and January, stated that it was critical to increase dramatically the use of special troops and especially electronic warfare units in the combat zone. He advocated creating a total information vacuum by putting remotely controlled portable jammers near guerilla bases and by suppressing satellite communications channels Dudayev used. He also believed it was vital to force tactics on the Chechens that put them at a disadvantage such as night operations. He also recommended not sending composite units to Chechnya with servicemen selected from several units and thrown together for a particular mission. Such a selection process results in losses two to three times higher than usual, according to Korotchenko.[82]

Another reporter, Anatol Lieven, offered telling observations about the fight for Grozny that could apply to any armed force. For example, the effectiveness of even the best technologies for urban warfare will depend on how confused and afraid the man using them is. Furthermore, the capacity of social tradition to mobilize fighters and impose a discipline on them goes beyond the "surface discipline" (imposed by basic training) of a modern army. Finally, failure can result from the limitations of firepower when fighting a dispersed infantry opponent behind good cover.[83]

Other lessons Russia's military learned based on information analysis also seeped into the papers. FSK director Sergey Stepashin noted that the enemy's potential was underestimated, Russia's strength was overestimated, Dudayev's Moscow connections were not identified, and Dudayev's informers with connections in high places continued to operate in place during the war.[84] Now we understand, Stepashin added, that special services must have special subdivisions to resolve the struggle against bandit groups and particularly dangerous criminals who head criminal structures.[85] Another commentator noted that the Russian army had to fulfill its task while an "information war" was conducted behind its back with its own country's propaganda machine firing the shots![86] The truth of the matter was that the Russian military refused to allow cameramen or journalists to interview their soldiers. Dudayev, on the other hand, understood full well the implications of the press and had it dancing to his tune. He showed the press what he wanted it to see, put his own spin on events through interviews, and

along with his propaganda chief Udugov, literally won the information war without opposition.

The second lesson learned was that opinions of Russian military professionals writing for journals and newspapers had influence. One lengthy critique of the operation, supposedly written by an unidentified but highly placed military officer writing for *Novaya Yezhednevnaya Gazeta*, noted shortcomings in so many areas that it appeared that the Russian armed forces must nearly be incompetent (which was not the case).[87] The officer listed troop preparation shortcomings such as poor morale and physical preparations. He noted a lack of training for a march or offensive combat, weak knowledge of materiel and armaments, weak fighting and weapon skills, poorly trained drivers, and a lack of confidence in using armaments. He added that the force lacked an overall knowledge of the rules of engagement against targets of opportunity and moving targets, first aid and administering antishock drugs, ambush preparations and means of movement, and target designation with smoke. Finally, he stated that there was poor use of smoke screens and sniper groups to neutralize enemy gun crews; poor preparation of assault groups to destroy enemy fire positions, pillboxes, and emplacements; and poor training in using flamethrowers and grenade launchers. In addition, personnel did not carry identification tags according to this officer, making their identification in case of death difficult.[88]

In April 1995, an article about the fight for Grozny appeared in the Russian military journal, *Armeyskiy Sbornik* (*Army Journal*). One of the first to address lessons learned in a professional journal, the article, titled "Sweeping Built Up Areas," did more than hint at some of the problems Russian commanders encountered. It noted the importance of unexpectedly, quickly, and completely sealing off areas to the enemy and the requirement to establish two rings of encirclement, the first 2 to 3 km from the main objective and the second on the outskirts of the city. Another problem was inability of tanks, BMPs, and other vehicles to cover the advance of ground troops and the lack of even "amateur" improvements to fighting vehicles and firing positions (such as putting screens on armor made from fine mesh metal netting or filling cartridge and shell boxes with crushed rock, broken brick, or gravel to reduce the effect of rounds fired at the vehicle).[89] The article also revealed that on many occasions one Russian unit fired on another due to Chechen chicanery. For example, during the assault on Grozny:

> Mortars mounted on Kamaz trucks fired one salvo and immediately moved to another area. They have learned to skillfully disorient fire

> spotters [forward observers], often creating a friendly fire situation. Thus, on the eve of the taking of the palace, a Russian Grad multiple rocket launcher fired on its own reconnaissance forces. Troops subjected each other to a half-hour of fire on approaches to Grozny, while motorized riflemen tested the strength of airborne personnel while moving up to the train station.[90]

According to Russian guidelines, the Russian force was undermanned for the operation. For combat in cities, the ratio of offensive and defensive forces must be 4:1 or 5:1 in favor of the attacker.[91] This was not the case in Grozny. It was apparent that 50,000 to 60,000 men were needed to storm Grozny. In 1941 when Kalinin was liberated, a ratio of 4:1 was needed. On 3 January 1995, only 5,000 Russian soldiers were in the city. In addition, the element of surprise was lost, and Dudayev reinforced his men with replacements from the south. This general situation sometimes is forgotten during the interpretation of lessons learned after the fight ended, but it greatly affected the course and outcome of the battle.

Russian officers interviewed in Moscow after the fight noted that elements of the Russian force appeared unprepared in both training and planning to fight in builtup areas. There were few local guides to move Russian forces through the city. As a result, Russian forces ended up in gardens and dead-end streets. A major problem both the MVD and the army encountered was identifying Chechen guerilla forces that would walk around the city, sometimes wearing Red Cross armbands, and then fire at Russian personnel from windows or dark alleyways. To distinguish fighters from peaceful city dwellers, the army and MVD began looking at men's shoulders for evidence of bruising from firing weapons and at forearms for burned hair or flesh from extracting hot cartridges. They closely examined clothing and smelled for gunpowder residue.[92] Further, to identify a Chechen artilleryman, Russian soldiers looked for glossy spots left by artillery and mortar rounds on the bends and cuffs of sleeves. Pockets that carried cartridges, if turned inside out, showed a shiny, silvery, leaden hue. A grenade launcher operator or mortar man was recognized from fibers and crumpled pieces of gun cotton on clothing.[93]

According to many Russian officers, Chechen use of the antitank, or RPG launcher, was the most effective city weapon. It could be used in the direct- or indirect-fire (that is, set up like a mortar) mode and was effective against people, vehicles, or helicopters as an area or point weapon. Russian forces used flamethrowers to drive snipers from their nests and clear buildings for their initial entry. Two other initial Russian

mistakes were that the Russians did not always properly employ infantrymen to support armor attacks (they followed behind armor instead of feeling out Chechen ambush sites), and they did not hold an area once it had been cleared.[94]

The third lesson learned was that some high-ranking Russian defense officials offered a more optimistic picture of what had transpired. Defense Minister Pavel Grachev and General Staff Chief Anatoliy Kvashnin, in interviews on 1 and 2 March 1995, presented their urban combat lessons learned. Their comments indicated they understood clearly the problems their forces encountered and that their forces now had to implement solutions. To Grachev, the main reasons for the initial failure to fulfill tasks were the lack of experience in fighting in cities, some commanders' lack of resolve, and the inadequate morale and psychological preparation of personnel.[95] Different rules, different laws, and a different pace applied since forces were fighting within Russia. The armed forces and MVD units lacked coordination. This forced some units to slow down or stop on some routes. The General Staff had to coordinate training and planning with other ministries in peacetime and in wartime, and to review relationships with the mass media and public organizations to keep patriotism high during a conflict.[96] Grachev underscored that Grozny demanded tactical changes in the way Russian forces would conduct city fights, especially in terms of manning assault units, improving sniper activities, carrying out intelligence operations, and explanatory work among the population. Colonel General Kvashnin noted that this was a real war, one that politicians began and they had to end. The army is merely a means of waging a large or small war and is unfamiliar with the techniques of waging a war on Russian territory.[97]

Finally, Chechen lessons learned were worthwhile to study for their insights on fighting a force that both greatly outnumbers them and is theoretically more organized for urban warfare. The Chechens fought in a nontraditional way, with rapid mobile units instead of fixed defenses. One key lesson was the importance of the sniper and the RPG gunner, or a combination of the two. For example, snipers were employed to draw fire from a Russian force, and then a Chechen ambush position overlooking the sniper's activities would open fire on the Russian column fighting the sniper. Additionally, forces could operate successfully in an independent mode. Both regular and volunteer forces under President Dudayev learned to work in a specific area or to respond to calls for assistance. While command was less centralized than in the Russian force, Motorola radios made coordination possible.

Chief of Staff Maskhadov directed his forces to fight in small groups, although this limited their ability to engage in extended combat. When the Chechens were able to force Russian soldiers from a building:

> They left at most five of their fighters in the building. After some time, the Russians would counterattack and concentrate at least a company against the building . . . but having taken back the building they invariably found only a few bodies of Chechen fighters. Also whenever the Russian soldiers took up defensive positions, they customarily positioned several people in every building, thus diluting their forces.[98]

It was also reported that the Chechens would fire a "fuga" into a window before attacking. A fuga was an RPG-7 round with two 400-gram pieces of trotyl explosives attached with adhesive tape. The Chechens also attached napalm to antitank grenades that could help damage the turret of the target.[99]

The most detailed Chechen lessons learned came from interviews with Chechen fighters some three or four years after the fighting ended. In one interview, titled "Chechen Commander: Urban Warfare in Chechnya," a Chechen commander listed some recommendations for conducting urban operations against both regular and irregular forces based on his experience.[100] First, study the people. One must understand the enemy in detail, not only from a military and political sense but also from a cultural sense. Chechen forces suffered only minimal psychological trauma due to their warrior ethic, their heritage of resisting Russian control, and their sense of survival. Chechens also used noncombatants to exercise psychological deception on the urban battlefield. They declared some villages and suburbs as "pro-Russian" or noncommitted when, in fact, these same areas were centers for strategic planning, command and control, and logistics purposes. This was a well-conducted information operation against the Russians.

Second, know the territory. Key terrain in a city is at the micro level. Do not rely on streets, signs, and most buildings as reference points. Use prominent buildings and monuments instead, as they usually remain intact. It was better to conduct reconnaissance by day and attack at night, which the Russians did not like to do. When forty Ukrainian volunteers signed up to support the Chechens, they were required to conduct detailed reconnaissance with Chechens before entering combat.

Third, study the opposition's weapons and equipment, and how this equipment might be employed in an urban environment. The

Chechens' "national weapon" was the RPG. Destroying armor was a great psychological defeat for the Russians and a great morale booster for the Chechens. The most effective weapon system employed against pure infantry was the sniper, a casualty producer, psychological weapon, and impediment to rapid movement. Nothing could slow down a force as much as a sniper. Chechens feared the Russian mortars more than any other weapon in the city but learned to employ their own with great skill as well. The Chechen force began the battle for Grozny with individual protective equipment but soon discarded it because it impaired mobility in the urban environment. The Motorola hand-held radio was the primary communications device. There was one radio for every six combatants, but it would have been preferable to have one per combatant. Little encryption was used, only the Chechen language. At the national equivalent of a headquarters, access was available to Inmarsat.[101]

The Chechen force also was very successful in redirecting Russian artillery and fighter fire to rain down on Russian forces. Chechen hunter-killer units would sneak between two Russian positions in the city, especially at night, and fire in one direction and then the other before moving out of the area. Thinking they were under attack, the Russian units would fire at each other, sometimes for hours. Many such episodes of fratricide were reported among the Russian ranks. The Chechens were also very interested in capturing or obtaining any Shmel thermobaric weapon system available. The Shmel is a 93mm Russian flamethrower that is 920mm long and weighs 12 kilograms. It has a maximum range of 1,000 meters, a sighting maximum of 600 meters, and a minimum range of 20 meters. The Shmel strongly resembles the U.S. Army's light antitank weapon (LAW) of the 1970s. The Russian force, to explain extensive damage to buildings in Grozny, stated that the Chechens had captured a boxcar full of Shmel weapons and were now using them indiscriminately. The Shmel was important because both sides realized a "heavy blast" direct-fire weapon system was a must for urban warfare. They also could be used against vehicles and fortified positions as a breaching device.

Finally, the Chechen force, by necessity, went into battle as light as possible. Mobility was the key to success against the slower and heavier Russian force, in the opinion of the Chechen commander. Organizationally, the Chechen force had seven-man subgroups (armor hunter-killer teams, a number slightly different than the six-man groups reported earlier) that contained three riflemen/automatic riflemen/ammunition bearers, two RPG gunners, one sniper, and one medic/corps-

man. Three of these subgroups made up most of a 25-man group or platoon, and three of these platoons formed 75-man groups. The Chechen force exploited Russian disorientation by moving behind and parallel to the Russian force once it entered the city. Snipers set up in hide positions that supported their respective platoons. The Chechen commander, according to the person who interviewed him, described the ambushes/assaults as follows:

> Each 75-man ambush group set up in buildings along one street block, and only on one side of the street—never on both sides of a street because of the cross fires a two-sided ambush would create. Only the lower levels of multi-story buildings were occupied to avoid casualties. One 25-man platoon comprised the 'killer team' and set up in three positions along the target avenue. They had the responsibility for destroying whatever column entered their site. The other two 25-man platoons set up in the buildings at the assumed entry points to the ambush site. They had responsibility for sealing off the ambush entry from escape by or reinforcement of the ambushed forces. The killer platoon established a command point (platoon HQ) with the center squad. As the intended target column entered the site, the squad occupying the building nearest the entry point would contact the other two squads occupying the center and far building positions. Primary means of communications was by Motorola radio. Once the lead vehicle into the site reached the far squad position, the far squad would contact the other two squads. The commander at the central squad would initiate or signal to initiate the ambush. Minefields were employed to reinforce ambushes by taking out reinforcing armor and to relieve pressure on the killer platoons in case the ambush bogged down.[102]

U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity analyst Arthur Speyer, speaking about the battle for Grozny to an audience at RAND, noted several Chechen weaknesses from a U.S. perspective. First, the Chechens' greatest weakness was their inability to conduct an extensive engagement. The small size of the Chechen units, coupled with their limited ammunition supplies, caused them to avoid large-scale battles. The Russians discovered that drawing the Chechens into a long engagement would allow the Russian force the time to surround the position and use overwhelming fire support. Control was another problem for Chief of Staff Aslan Maskhadov. He stated that many of the independent groups decided for themselves when, where, and how long they would remain in combat. On more than one occasion, Maskhadov noted that local militia forces would simply pick up and go home when they got bored, tired, or cold. Troops were

required to withstand long periods of intense combat with limited resupply and rest.

The lessons of the fight for Gronzy are many and quite sobering for anyone who contemplates using troops in an urban environment. While some of the lessons learned by Russian and Chechen combatants are peculiar to that region, others have wider applicability. No army wants to engage in urban combat, but increasing urbanization and the danger of strikes from high-precision weapons may well force the fight into the city where the defender has the advantage. The Chechen decision to continue to fight from "successive cities" is indicative of their reliance on this tactic.

Most Russian analysts viewed the Grozny operation as a success but one that fell far short of a victory. Many pointed directly to the high command as being guilty of sending troops into battle before they were prepared and for implementing a less than complete plan. One analyst called the top brass the "Children of August 1991," a reference to those who came to power after the failed coup in 1991 against then General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. Their dramatic upward climb came after they disobeyed their superiors, such as Defense Minister Pavel Grachev's decision to support Boris Yeltsin and not his superior at the time, Soviet Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov, the first such case in the army's history.[103] Colonel General Boris Gromov, the last commander of the 40th Army to leave Afghanistan, was relieved of his duties by one of the Children of August. Gromov had hesitated in putting his support behind the fight in Chechnya. He noted that Russian specialists did not take into account the historical, national, religious, geographical, and meteorological factors, all of which should have affected the planning and time of year for such an intervention. Most unfortunate of all, the battle for Grozny was only two months of what would become a 21-month war.

One Russian officer noted that Russian military and political leaders required a deeper understanding of when and how to use force. As a result, it was recommended that political leaders participate in short courses at the General Staff Academy. This idea is not new. For the past five or so years, Harvard University has been conducting classes for selected members of the Russian leadership. Each class received instruction in the basic principles of the use of force from a U.S. perspective. Obviously the planners of the battle for Grozny ignored this military-political guidance. The Russian armed forces lacked criteria for the development of rules of engagement. Advanced instruction in combat in cities was lacking in the curriculum of the

academies, even if at the expense of large-scale wars (for example, the tactics of assault detachments and shock groups need updating to include modern equipment and techniques). Further, the Russian government did not understand how low the military had sunk in terms of readiness in the past five years. Lip service to military reform by politicians had not worked, and the military leadership needed to throw off its pompous attitude.

Preparation for urban combat begins in peacetime and requires the development of an extensive set of conditions under which the fight will be attempted. A vast template of courses of action, options, constraints, limitations, force mixes, enemy compositions, legal factors, and city characteristics must be studied and digested before decisions are made. Two of the most important conclusions drawn from Grozny are that there is no standard urban combat operation and reinforcing failure to attain success does not necessarily result in culmination. First, each operation is unique to the opponent, the city, specific operational and tactical issues, and geopolitical considerations, among other factors. This is a difficult, crucial task for any army but especially for one moving from a forward-deployed to an expeditionary state as the United States is attempting. The requirements to sufficiently sustain or support urban combat become enormous. Second, the Chechens were eventually evicted from Grozny after 37 days of fighting. This initial Russian success in Grozny did not last. In August 1996, the Chechen force recaptured the city, and the Russians were never able to culminate their effort and left Chechnya later that month. However, the Chechens were only to lose Grozny again to the Russians in January 2000 in the second Chechen-Russian conflict. As more information becomes available, a look at the latter battles for Grozny would also be educational and informative for the military professional.

Notes

1. Varied sources, speaking from their own national perspective, are used in the writing of this chapter. It is impossible to check the reliability of each account because the authors cannot be reached personally. Thus, the reader should keep in mind that each account of an incident depended to a great degree on one's perspective (Russian military, Chechen fighter, Russian journalist). This chapter includes all perspectives in retelling this battle and avoids terms such as freedom fighter or rebel when describing the Chechens.

2. Luisa Meireles, Interview with Ramazan Abdulatipov, *Expresso* (4 February 1993), 20 as reported in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)-SOV-95-025, 7 February 1995, 13.

3. Anatoliy Sergeevich Kulikov, "The First Battle of Grozny," Appendix B of RAND report, *Capital Preservation: Preparing for Urban Operations in the Twenty-First Century*, 13-58, based on Kulikov's remarks at a March 2000 conference in Santa Monica, California.

4. "Chechnya," *Moscow News*, 16-22 December 1994, No. 50, 1, 2.

5. Valeriy Vyzhutovich, "Chechnya Will Spurn Kremlin's Representatives," *Izvestiya*, 20 December 1994, 2, as reported in FBIS-SOV-94-244, 19.

6. Kulikov.

7. "Chechnya."

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. A. Kvashnin, "Troops Acquired Combat Maturity in Grave Ordeals; From Speech Delivered by Colonel General A. Kvashin at 28 February Assembly of Armed Forces Leading Personnel," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 2 March 1995, 3, as translated and published in FBIS-SOV-95-044, 7 March 1995, 23.

13. Kulikov, 29-31.

14. Ibid., 34.

15. Moscow Mayak Radio, 1 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-001, 3 January 1995, 24.

16. Dodge Billingsley, "Interview with Ilias Akhmadov," *The Harriman Review* (Winter 1999-2000), 38-42.

17. Based on an interview with Arthur Speyer who interviewed several Chechen fighters after the first battle for Grozny.

18. Aleksandr Zhilin, Interview with Colonel General Boris Gromov, *Moskovskiy Novosti* (8-15 January 1995), 1, 5.

19. Viktor Litovkin, "Shooting the 131st Maykop Brigade," *Izvestiya* (11 January 1995), 4, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-008, 12 January 1995, 37.

Litovkin included in his report actual interviews with participants from the battle. In another report, a high-ranking Russian officer said losses were not as great as this. He said 210 of the 450 men originally listed as missing were discovered in hospitals or other units. Only 26 were registered as killed. See Interfax, 17 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-011, 18 January 1995, 27. A report appeared in *Red Star* on 11 January that said the losses the 81st Guards MRR sustained in Grozny on 1 January were greatly exaggerated. To date, only sixteen soldiers and six officers died in combat, according to the article. However, the report also noted that no data was available on 463 servicemen listed as missing. The report indicated many soldiers were scattered all over Grozny and were slowly returning to the unit. How many may have been in the pile of bodies near the presidential palace was not mentioned. See Aleksandr Bugay and Oleg Bedula, "About the 81st MRR: Reliable Information With No Sensations," *Krasnaya Zvezda* (11 January 1995), 1, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-007, 11 January 1995, 31. As it turned out, this was a Russian attempt to cover up its massive losses in the first few days of January 1995.

20. Ibid., Litovkin.

21. Pavel Felgenhauer, "The Chechen Campaign," from a talk given at a conference in Monterey, California, 7 November 1995, 14.

22. Natalia Gevorkyan, *Moskovskoiyi Novostii* (17-24 December 1995), 6, as printed in *The Current Digest*, Vol. XLVII, No. 50 (1995), 17, 18.

23. ITAR-TASS, 19 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-013, 20 January 1995, 22.

24. From the author's discussion with Ms. Garrels in Moscow, March 1995.

25. Interfax, 19 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-013, 20 January 1995, 23.

26. Konstantin Merezhko, "Caucasian Prisoners, or Pawns are in the Hands of Amateurs," *Sluzhba* (20 December 1994), 1, as reported in Japan Registry Service (JPRS)-UMA-95-003, 31 January 1995, 11.

27. "Pavel Grachev: Russian Unity Defended," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (2 March 1995), 2, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-042, 3 March 1995, 21.

28. Moscow Russian TV, 4 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-003, 5 January 1995, 12.

29. Moscow Mayak Radio, 4 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-004, 6 January 1995, 15.

30. ITAR-TASS, 5 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-004, 6 January 1995, 8.

31. ITAR-TASS, 4 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-002, 4 January 1995, 24.

32. Moscow Mayak Radio, 5 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-004, 6 January 1995, 17.

33. Interfax, 6 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-005, 9 January 1995, 23, 24.

34. Ostankino TV, 7 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-005, 9 January 1995, 27.

35. ITAR-TASS, 9 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-006, 10 January 1995, 4.

36. ITAR-TASS, 7 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-005, 9 January 1995, 25.

37. Moscow TV, 7 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-005, 9 January 1995, 24.

38. Marine Corps interview with Grozny unit commander.

39. Nikita Vaynonen, "Television Camera Does Not Shoot, But It is Unmerciful," *Rossiyskiye Vesti* (10 January 1995), 1, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-006, 10 January 1995, 8. For other reports on the military "victimizing" journalists, see Oleg Panfilov, "The Next Target—Journalists," *Izvestiya* (6 January 1995), 3, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-005, 9 January 1995, 35, and Interfax, 10 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-007, 11 January 1995, 24.

40. Vladimir Georgiyev, "The Chechen People Are for a Peaceful Life," *Rossiyskiye Vesti* (24 January 1995), 1, 2, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-015, 24 January 1995, 23.

41. Moscow TV, 8 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-005, 9 January 1995, 11.

42. ITAR-TASS, 8 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-005, 9 January 1995, 29.

43. Ibid.

44. Interfax, 8 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-005, 9 January 1995, 30.

45. Moscow Mayak Radio, 8 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-005, 9 January 1995, 31.

46. Paris AFP, 10 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-006, 10 January 1995, 14.

47. ITAR-TASS, 10 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-007, 11 January 1995, 35.

48. Moscow RIA, 9 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-008-A, 12 January 1995, 11.

49. Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy, 8 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-005, 9 January 1995, 28.

50. Interfax, 10 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-007, 11 January 1995, 34.

51. Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy, 10 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-007, 11 January 1995, 35.

52. Moscow RIA, 10 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-008-A, 12 January 1995, 5.

53. ITAR-TASS, 11 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-007, 11 January 1995, 30.

54. Moscow Ostankino TV, 11 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-009, 13 January 1995, 32.

55. Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy, 12 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-009, 13 January 1995, 38.

56. Paola Messana and Catherine Triomphe, Paris AFP, 13 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-009, 13 January 1995, 14.

57. Moscow 2x2, 14 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-010, 17 January 1995, 31.

58. ITAR-TASS, 16 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-010, 17 January 1995, 37.

59. Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy, 15 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-010, 17 January 1995, 31.

60. ITAR-TASS, 14 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-010, 17 January 1995, 33.

61. Interfax, 16 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-010, 17 January 1995, 32. For a more complete account of shock units and assault detachments, see Mr. Les Grau, "Russian Urban Tactics: Lessons From the Battle for Grozny," National Defense University Strategic Forum, Number 38, July 1995.

62. Interfax, 17 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-010, 17 January 1995, 43.

63. ITAR-TASS, 19 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-013, 20 January 1995, 19.

64. Interfax, 19 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-013, 20 January 1995, 19.

65. Mayak Radio, 19 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-013, 20 January 1995, 19. Apparently, contracts were also being concluded with those Chechens of this district who wanted to participate in opposing the Russians.

66. Felgenhauer, 17.

67. ITAR-TASS, 21 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-014, 23 January 1995, 24.

68. Moscow Ostankino TV, 21 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-014, 23 January 1995, 26.

69. Interfax, 22 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-014, 23 January 1995, 28.

70. ITAR-TASS, 22 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-014, 23 January 1995, 28.

71. ITAR-TASS, 24 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-016, 25 January 1995, 26.

72. Ibid.

73. Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy, 23 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-015, 24 January 1995, 30.

74. Radio Rossii, 26 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-017, 26 January 1995, 12.

75. ITAR-TASS, 26 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-018, 27 January 1995, 41.

76. ITAR-TASS, 31 January 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-021, 1 February 1995, 15.

77. Pavel Felgenhauer, "The Russian Army Will Be in Chechnya for a Long Time…" *Segodnya*, 25 January 1995, 1, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-022, 2 February 1995, 12.

78. ITAR-TASS, 1318 GMT, 3 February 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-024, 6 February 1995, 21; and Interfax, 1416 GMT, 6 February 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-025, 7 February 1995, 23.

79. Anatoliy Yurkin, ITAR-TASS, 1529 GMT, 7 February 1995, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-027, 9 February 1995, 25.

80. "Objectively and Promptly," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (8 February 1995), 2, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-028, 10 February 1995, 25.

81. Anthony Loyd, "Fleeing Chechens Pledge 'War With No Front Lines,'" *The Times*, 8 February 1995, 11.

82. Igor Korotchenko, "The Operation in Chechnya: Success or Defeat of the Russian Army," *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, supplement to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (February 1995), 1, 2, as reported in JPRS-UMA-95-008, 28 February 1995, 1-3.

83. Anatol Lieven, "The World Turned Upside Down," *Armed Forces Journal* (August 1998), 40-43. Lieven's article is worth the time to look up and read.

84. Ibid., and Vyzhutovich interview with Stepashin, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-043, 6 March 1995, 35.

85. Gregoriyev, 23.

86. Sergey Pavlenko, "The Chechen Drama: Why is its Essence Often Better Understood by the Ordinary Soldier Than by Many Politicians?" *Krasnaya Zvezda* (7 February 1995), 1, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-027, 9 February 1995, 29.

87. Yelena Afanasyeva and Dmitriy Muratov, "Minister Grachev's Statement That He Would Take Grozny With a Single Regiment Had a Deleterious Effect on the Consciousness of Commanders," *Novaya*

Yezhednevnaya Gazeta (28 January 1995), 1-2, as reported in JPRS-UMA-95-007, 21 February 1995, 6-9.

88. Afanasyeva, 7, 8.

89. Colonel Oleg Namsarayev, "Sweeping Built Up Areas," *Armeyskiy Sbornik* (April 1995), 35-37, as reported in FBIS-UMA-95-139s, 20 July 1995, 20, 21.

90. Namsarayev, 21.

91. Igor Sibirtsev, on press conference of Lieutenant General Mayorov, "On the Northern Front of Grozny," *Vecherniy Novosibirsk* (30 January 1995), 4, as reported in JPRS-UMA-95-005, 7 February 1995, 6.

92. From a conversation with an MVD officer, Moscow, June 1995.

93. Namsarayev, 22.

94. From the author's discussions with Russian officers who fought in Grozny.

95. Ibid., and Kvashnin, 25.

96. Pavel Grachev, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (2 March 1995), 2.

97. Ibid., and Kvashnin, 27.

98. Stasys Knezys and Romanas Sedlickas, *The War in Chechnya* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 108.

99. Ibid.

100. "Chechen Commander: On Urban Warfare in Chechnya," working draft received from the Marine Corps, 1999.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid. Other significant Chechen lessons learned and related by the Chechen commander were: The tracer round is useless in urban areas due to serious negative tradeoffs. Operations security is especially important in the urban fight. Chechen commanders were so concerned about secrecy that they did not brief their men about the objective of an operation until they were already on the way to their objective. Chechen commanders did not move by "flanking maneuvers" but instead by "chess-like maneuvers" to hit the Russians where they least expected it. "Hugging" techniques were also used (setting up positions within 50 to 250 meters from Russian positions to render Russian artillery and rocket fire ineffective). As a rule, the Chechens did not place mines or booby traps inside buildings. The possibility of "friendly" casualties was not worth any possible benefit gained.

103. Feliks Babitskiy, "Dismissals for Generals, That May Be the Outcome of the Chechen Crisis," *Rossiyskiye Vesti* (21 January 1995), 1, as reported in FBIS-SOV-95-013, 20 January 1995, 19.

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